

Research about Features in Visual Communication of Apple Advertisement Tracked under Influence of New Media

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Abstract: With the development of technology, new media have now occupied major parts of people's daily lives, especially for the younger generations. These new media, such as Twitter, Facebook, and TikTok, do make humans lives easier, but conversely, they also bring new challenges for advertisers about how to better promote a product or brand under the influences of these new media. Therefore, it is important to examine the features of those successful brands in the world, such as Apple, to see how these brands adapt to the new trend of this era. Therefore, the author chose one of the Apple advertisements Tracked to explore the reasons why it could conquer people's minds and potentially promote their products. After a rigorous analysis of Tracked, the author found that there are mainly three elements by which Apple advertisements could be more competitive, including concise captions, fewer words to be used, and a positive message being conveyed to the audiences.

Keywords: visual communication, Apple, new media, advertisement

1. Introduction

Apple Inc., an American computer and consumer electronics company, was founded on April 1, 1976, by Steve Jobs, Steve Wozniak, and Ronald Wayne. This company is mainly famous for the iPhone, Mac, iPad, and Apple Watch. As what is found in Apple's slogan "Think Different" indicates, innovation and accessibility are always regarded as the cores of all of their products, services, and even their advertisements. These two concepts demonstrated that a large number of global consumers became crazy fans of Apple, which significantly increased its market cap. With a market capitalization of more than 2 trillion dollars, Apple is now among the most valuable corporations in the world [1]. In addition to this, according to an official report about Apple's fourth quarter results on October 27, 2022, the company reported quarterly earnings per diluted share of \$1.29, up 4% over the prior year, and a record quarterly revenue for the September quarter of \$90.1 billion, up 8% year over year [2]. Moreover, its annual revenue increased by 8% to \$394.3 billion, while yearly earnings per diluted share increased by 9% to \$6.11 [2].

Apple's great rewards cannot leave its wonderful products' performances. In the field of mobile phones, the birth of the iPhone 4 is considered a turning point, which indicates a brand-new start for phones and smartphones. There are plenty of breakthroughs in different aspects of the iPhone, such as its remarkable appearance and secure and convenient operating system. Among them, nowadays, a new concept—users' privacy—has come into people's sights. User's privacy is the private

information of users, which could include their preferences, jobs, addresses, phone numbers, and their purchasing records on a shopping website. Some industries make use of this huge amount of data without approval to tailor their advertising, products, or product packages on the basis of information from decided target audiences. Nevertheless, in the past, users may not have realized the importance of their privacy or even the fact that they gave these companies the right to access all of their privacy when using their products or services. This means that customers cannot even take charge of their own privacy, which should be their own right. On the one hand, the behaviors of stealing a user's privacy disobey relevant laws; on the other hand, they also lead to potential threats to users. Although some countries have made efforts to protect users' privacy, such as by passing the Electronic Communications Privacy Act in 1986, They still cannot prevent businesses from acquiring unauthorized information from users, as it is very difficult for governments to supervise a wide range of industries around the world.

However, Apple has continuously considered users' privacy as one of their core values and a way of being creative. Therefore, to better protect users' privacy, Apple decided to allow consumers to manage their own privacy, and Apple has already made huge efforts to achieve this on their products, such as the iPhone. First of all, it is about app tracking transparency. The user could decide on their own which app could track their activities. This direct and symbolic function provides users with an extremely effective method to avoid personal information on frequently used applications that store an enormous amount of users' information, such as shopping records, from being stolen. Moreover, thanks to the invention of passkeys, consumers do not need to worry about password leakage on some websites due to malware or phishing. A passkey is a special digital key that can only be used with the website or app that it was made for. Also, people could use some apps created by Apple for daily tasks, such as Safari, Maps, and Photos. These apps only mind their own businesses, not those of their users, and could keep users' privacy secure when they are using them. By using these methods, Apple follows through on its commitment to every user's privacy.

To promote their products features on the iPhone, Apple has made many effective and creative advertisements to express their concern for the user's privacy. In the latest advertisement named Tracked, a lively story mainly surrounding a man's daily life was described. Four different scenes of this man, such as buying coffee and taking a taxi, where the man's private information was leaked, were shown on a one-minute video in very humorous, relaxing, and simple styles.

2. Literature Review

With the development of new media, such as YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook, acquiring a sufficient share of the money, time, and minds of consumers is one of the best ways to tailor creative and unique contents to increase the competitiveness of a brand in the market. The success of Apple did not occur occasionally. Apple is not only an excellent technology company but also an excellent storyteller. Lim and Puspita have conducted a study, and they pointed out that the analysis revealed that all three of Apple's story-based advertisements examined in this study have sufficient narrative probability and authenticity, which makes the company's pitch plausible [3]. Almeida, Sousa, Rodrigues, Candeias, and Au-Yong-Oliveira found that a correlation exists between owning just one smartphone and owning more of a brand's items, with Apple users owning more brand products on average than Samsung users [4]. As a result, these researchers deduced that Apple customers are more devoted [4]. Also, it was discovered that in Portugal, the store where the devices are purchased is not independent of the brand of the gadgets [4]. Compared to Samsung customers, Apple users make more purchases from the brand, both offline and online [4]. Therefore, many researchers started to carry out a series of studies on Apple in order to explore the recipes behind Apple's advertisements.

From the survey, Hiremath and Gupta also discovered that Apple's marketing efforts, including its various campaigns, assisted the company in leaving a lasting impression on consumers [5]. Sjaerodji

and Indrawati also found something similar to Hiremath and Gupta's research in a virtual advertisement published by Apple on YouTube for iPad Air that there were verbal and nonverbal cues among these components [6]. Additionally, the findings of this study demonstrated that typographic semiotic elements have particular meanings that are appropriate for the idea of an Apple virtual commercial [6]. Nevertheless, the study of the semiotic typography used in the introducing iPad Air — Apple virtual commercial may have several interpretations, depending on the components used [6]. These signs can be verbal or nonverbal, depending on the elements, and take the form of things like music, sound effects, typefaces, the anatomy of letters, font size, shapes, and colors, motion (kinetic typography), models, and situations [6]. Moreover, Sjaerodji and Indrawati also emphasized that the purpose of the aforementioned components is to persuade viewers and customers to recall the messages and signs associated with those products [6]. In addition, Sjaerodji and Indrawati consider that the findings and discussion are consistent with the idea that the Introducing iPad Air — Apple virtual advertisement is also dependent on typography because it makes use of specific semiotic elements and meanings that are significant to the advertisement and have a positive impact on viewers and customers [6].

Apple is considered a model for building up brands in the electronic industry. And, as one of Apple's main expenditures, advertising is of great significance. Schudson pointed out that the advertisement connects a seller to a buyer in a similar way to a sales pitch [7]. In contrast to sales talk, it uses words and images that are accessible to all of the buyers and are not specific to any one of them to connect the buyers to a group of customers [7]. A shared symbolic culture is established and reflected in advertising [7].

In the advertising field, plenty of researchers have carried out research about analyzing the relationship between advertising and marketing and the importance of advertising. However, few of them are trying to analyze a piece of successful advertising from the perspective of visual communication. Moreover, although lots of studies are trying to explore the secrets of Apple's success in their marketing strategies, industry cultures, the designs of their products, and their ecosystem, a few studies are being conducted on Apple's advertising, where Apple also performs successfully. Through a rigorous analysis of one of Apple's advertisements, the author hopes to find Apple's keys to create effective advertisements so that other advertisers can learn from it and apply the knowledge. In addition, Apple's success as one of the leaders in the electronic industries is not occasional, which means that there are a lot of examples for these industries to use as references. This research will study one of Apple's advertisements, Tracked, through observation using relevant visual theories.

3. Methodology

This paper explores the reasons why Apple is so successful at creating advertising. Therefore, using one of Apple's advertisements, Tracked, as an example, the method for this study is observation. The author will mainly observe the story, visual cues, sound, and behaviors of six figures in order to know the features of Apple's advertising in visual communication.

4. Results

After detailed and rigorous observation on Tracked, it is found that there are three elements that allow Apple to promote their products very successfully. First of all, their story is very concise and effective. For instance, the video Tracked is only one minute long, but it still contains four small stories, which helped Apple deliver the core message of the advertisement that Apple's products could prevent consumers privacy from being stolen in such an effective and efficient way. What is more, few and even no words are included in this advertisement. However, all these words are very useful to create

a natural and humorous atmosphere. In each story of the advertisement, the talk is very short, and the main captions are shown through the movements and facial expressions of actors and actresses. More importantly, the advertisement is trying to tell people that their lives could be better with the help of an iPhone. In the end of the video, after the man clicked on the button 'ask apps not to track', any other people who tried to get the man's private information disappeared immediately. In the perspective of visual communication, all these three elements will be analyzed further.

5. Discussion

In the advertisement from Apple, Tracked, this one-minute video could still include four small stories. Nevertheless, what matters more is that, on the one hand, these stories are tightly connected to only one topic, protecting users' privacy, and, on the other hand, each story could also deliver effective contents in approximately 10 seconds.

There are several reasons why Apple would make its advertisement this way. The fast paces of global development have witnessed less space left in people's minds for unnecessary contents. This era is full of a diverse and large amount of information, which people have to deal with every day. Therefore, the proportion of time spent on advertising is shrinking. In addition, new media, such as TikTok, are very popular among the younger generations. On these platforms, most videos are around 30 seconds, which is very short but extremely eye-catching. Yang, Zhao, and Ma explained that since TikTok's inception, young people have preferred the TikTok application because of its distinct audience positioning and innovative communication techniques [8]. Zuo and Huang mentioned that Tik-Tok currently supports 150 countries and 75 languages, and it is the number-one app in more than 40 different nations and regions [9]. Therefore, if advertisers do not follow this latest trend, they will be knocked out.

Admittedly, it is not easy to create a short and effective video for promotion. First of all, advertisement in the form of short videos may be a waste of resources, such as money and time. If the advertisers are not good storytellers, the one-minute videos may not be enough for them. Therefore, advertisers should make enough preparation before starting their creation, such as brainstorming, positively communicating with their team members, and carrying out prior research in the market. Although it seems challenging to condense all the elements of a video into just one minute, its benefits still outweigh its drawbacks. To start with, it could also save expenses spent on promotion, as less time indicates fewer costs. Also, if this video is very effective and successful, then there is no need for a company to create more advertisements to achieve the same effects that the effective video could bring. In addition, more concise videos could significantly decrease the occurrence of mistakes. The mistakes could include a wide range of issues, such as racism, cultural differences, stereotypes, politics, and feminism. Sometimes, if a company makes a mistake in some of these aspects, this will lead to disaster for the company.

In the Apple advertisement, Tracked, the words are very rare, and most of them are just small talks among figures, which makes all the videos more natural. However, all these words were not arranged casually but with some purpose. For instance, in the video, there is a scene where the taxi driver asks the chief actor, "Data of birth?" All the words in this video are similar, and they seem to be daily words, but actually, all of them serve the same topic: Tracked.

In the past, advertisers would add many words, such as repetition of brands' names or their products names, to a video so that it could produce a brainwashing effect on consumers. It is true that this method could work for a certain period of time. Nevertheless, this era is completely different, where too many words allow consumers to feel annoyed and unresponsive about the product and its brand. Besides, the preferences of consumers have also changed, which indicates that customers prefer something simpler and more natural, as they may think they access enough fake news every day.

To better adapt to audiences' tastes, advertisers should be more creative than usual. For example, it is good to start talking about a story with a background relating to individuals' daily lives. Furthermore, informal language is encouraged because it gives viewers the impression that something is happening in front of their eyes. However, too many words will make the whole video wordy. More importantly, creating a relaxing atmosphere in the video is also helpful. In the advertising, *Tracked*, the whole video is very humorous. For example, a caption might say that the coffee seller followed the chief actor and squeezed into the same car after the chief actor got on the taxi. In addition to this, the music throughout the entire video is also useful in creating a humorous atmosphere.

After viewing this video, *Tracked*, it mainly tells audiences a story that by using iPhone, people could have a better life as they do not need to worry about being *Tracked* by a coffee salesperson, a taxi driver, or an employee working in the bank. Not only in this advertisement, but among nearly all the advertisements created by Apple, they all delivered a similar message to the audiences: that with the products, people can live a better life.

Actually, in people's daily lives, they have to face many difficulties, such as unemployment, diseases, and financial pressure. Rosling, Rosling, and Ronnlund assumed that many segments of the population, even in prosperous nations like the United States, think that things are becoming worse and that the odds are against them [10]. Also, in the minds of consumers, they possibly have been tired of being conveyed negative emotions or messages from the advertising and do not want to be told anything about how life is awful after suffering from plenty of pressure from their real lives. As a result, it is better for advertisers to think of a positive story, where audiences may find that they can escape from reality for a short moment when they are viewing this type of advertising. This type of advertising does help audiences build up positive images and impressions of a brand as it may inspire them to go ahead, though audiences have realized that the advertising is just for promotion.

6. Conclusion

As one of the most valuable brands in the world, Apple's achievement is not only built on its innovation and creativity but also, more importantly, on its ability to tell stories to consumers about their products, services, or brand itself. Through the analysis of one of Apple's advertisements, *Tracked*, the author found that there were mainly three aspects where Apple performed well. First of all, concise captions are highly recommended. To achieve this, advertisers should remove all of the unnecessary contents and make sure that the remaining ones are highly effective and only serve one single topic. Besides, allowing consumers to interpret it through watching and then thinking is much better than directly telling them through words. As a result, during the creation of advertisements, advertisers should consider advertising as artwork, not a task. Last but not least, delivering a positive message could arouse the good feelings of audiences toward a brand. Differently, advertisements conveying a negative message could give audiences a sense of being threatened, and then audiences may be aggressive toward the products so as to protect themselves.

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